

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 INRE-00 SS-20 NSC-07 USIE-00

DRC-01 SP-03 A-01 /057 W

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O 041405Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 688

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL MADRAS IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 4569

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: PRESS AND OTHER CHARGES ABOUT CONGEN CALCUTTA'S
TRIP TO ASSAM

REF: CALCUTTA 569 (RPTD TO DEPT AS NEW DELHI 4102); CALCUTTA
662 (NOT RPTD TO DEPT)

1. A NUMBER OF CHARGES AND ACCUSATIONS CONCERNING THE MARCH
15 TO 22 VISIT TO ASSAM OF CONSUL GENERAL PICKERING, BURLEIGH
AND MCCORMACK (REFTEL) HAVE SURFACED IN THE PRESS.

2. THE MARCH 22 HINDUSTAN TIMES CARRIED A BRIEF ITEM DATE-
LINED SHILLONG STATING THAT AN UNPULLICIZED VISIT OF A FOUR-
MEMBER TEAM HEADED BY CONSUL GENERAL PICKERING TO ASSAM AND
MEGHALAYA HAD SURPRISED POLITICAL CIRCLES IN BOTH STATES.
ONE OF THE TEAM MEMBERS WAS "KNOWN TO BE" A CIA AGENT WHO
HAD VISITED THE AREA JUST BEFORE THE 1972 LANGUAGE DISTURBANCES.
THE ARTICLE GAVE THE NAMES OF THE GROUP AND THE ITINERARY FOR
THE VISIT, WHICH "WAS SAID TO BE A ROUTINE FAMILIARIZATION
TOUR." (APPLICATIONS FOR PERMITS HAD BEEN PENDING FOR SEVERAL
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MONTHS, AND MEA TOLD US THE ASSAM GOVERNMENT WAS "INFORMED".

3. LATER PRESS REPORTS SAID ON MARCH 30 CPI AND CONGRESS MEMBERS OF THE ASSAM STATE ASSEMBLY EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT THE VISIT. THE HOME MINISTER TOLD THE ASSEMBLY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAD RESPONSIBILITIES CONCERNING THE AMERICAN OFFICIALS' VISIT; THEY VISITED ASSAM WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND RESPONSIBILITIES CONCERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER WERE DULY OBSERVED. THEY DIDN'T MEET ANY PEOPLE, BUT SOME PEOPLE MAY HAVE MET THEM. THEY CAME TO SEE THE TEMPLES OF ASSAM. THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAD ADVISED AGAINST THE VISIT WHEN THE CENTER SOUGHT ITS OPINION IN 1973.

4. OTHER FALLOUT INCLUDED A PRESS REPORT THAT THE SECRETARY OF THE ASSAM STUDENT CONFERENCE PRO-CPI SENT THE CHIEF MINISTER A MEMORANDUM SAYING THERE HAD BEEN DISTURBANCES FOLLOWING THE CONSUL GENERAL'S VISIT; AN EDITORIAL IN A BENGALI CIP DAILY THAT FOCUSED ON THE ASSAM TRIP AND BURLEIGH AND ENDED WITH A DEMAND THAT THIS SUSPICIOUS PERSON BE COMPELLED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY; A CIP NEW AGE PIECE ON TROUBLE IN MIZORAM THAT ALLEGED MEDDLING BY THE US CONSULATE AND CITED THE UN-ANNOUNCED VISIT OF THE CONSUL GENERAL TO THE SENSITIVE AREA.

5. ON APRIL 3, CONGRESS AND PI MEMBERS OF THE WEST BENGAL ASSEMBLY ADVANCED A NUMBER OF CHARGES RELATING TO BURLEIGH'S TRAVELS AND THE TRIP TO ASSAM AND DEMANDED THAT BURLEIGH BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY IMMEDIATELY. A STATEMENT BY THE HOME MINISTER (IN WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER RAY IS HOME MINISTER) WAS ALSO DEMANDED.

6. COMMENT: SINCE THE WEST BENGAL GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO MAKE A STATEMENT ON THE ISSUE, CONSUL GENERAL PICKERING HAS REQUESTED AN URGENT APPOINTMENT TO SEE THE CHIEF MINISTER TOMORROW, APRIL 5. I WILL DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH MEA JOINT SECRETARY TEJA THE SAME DAY. SINCE THE CPI IS LOOKING FOR AMERICAN TARGETS SUCH AS BURLEIGH TO ATTACK, IN CONJUNCTION WITH ITS CURRENT CRITICISM OF THE GOI, WE CAN EXPECT MORE OF THESE ACCUSATIONS-- PARTICULARLY WHEN WE TRAVEL (NEW DELHI 4559). THE ASSAM HOME MINISTER'S HELPFUL REMARKS DID UNDERCUT SOME OF THE ACCUSATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VOICED IN THE ASSAM ASSEMBLY AND IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE A SIMILAR STATEMENT FROM THE WEST BENGAL GOVERNMENT. SCHNEIDER

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